

George Washington University

Oregon Shakespearean Festival

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understood every innuendo that older actors fondle self-consciously), the sexual language was unembarrassed, enthusiastic, and innocent, and the language of romance was entirely believable. "Hanging out" and girl watching in this Verona were too natural to seem like acting. Specific performances showed me new, true things about characters that had seemed one-dimensional to me before.

Benvolio's role as peacemaker had clearer definition than it usually has. This Benvolio conveyed an intense passion for order, a quality made stunningly present as he not-quite-successfully attempted to master his grief by undertaking systematically to clear the stage after the death of Tybalt. That scene in itself reveals the strength of Barnes's direction. The likeliest place for a break in the performance was immediately after Tybalt's death. But that would leave the arena stage strewn with weapons and other props. Barnes made the clearing of the stage a futile but necessary gesture toward overcoming loss and restoring order to Verona. Barnes's direction also infused the ascetic and philosophical Friar Laurence with an unfamiliar vulnerability to human feeling. In his first scene children surrounded the Friar as he explained his herb lore. In III. iii the Friar's embrace, designed to comfort and restrain Romeo from suicide, placed the Friar under the influence of Romeo's passion. We watched as all of the Friar's shifts to offer consolation for banishment were overwhelmed by the immediacy of life with Juliet: "Go get thee to thy love."

As in the Marin production, the sword fights augmented but never overshadowed the Stockton *Romeo and Juliet*. (Directors of swordplay appear at last to be subordinating their talents to those of directors.) These sword fights—choreographed by David Boushey—seemed natural and full of real danger. In the intimacy of the arena staging the opening swordplay forced the audience into the action of the play.

A final note of encouragement for a group that has announced intentions to present a series of Renaissance plays: The Center for Living History (the same group that presents the Renaissance Pleasure Faire, a carnival of arts, crafts, and theatre, convened on summer weekends in Marin County) presented Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* with opulent costumes on a bare platform stage. This group prides itself upon understanding the variety of Elizabethan language styles. That, no doubt, attracted them to this play. Though the orthodoxy or reasonableness of some of the actors' versions of Elizabethan pronunciation were disputable, there could be no arguing their understanding of their text or the vitality of their delivery.

PLANS FOR 1979. (1) BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE. The Berkeley Repertory Theatre has no plans to perform a Shakespearean play in 1979. Address: Vintage 1870, Yountville, California 94599. (2) AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE. General Director William Ball has not yet announced his 1979 program. Address: 450 Geary Street, San Francisco, California 94102. (3) BERKELEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL. The Berkeley Shakespeare Festival has not yet announced its 1979 program. Address: 1879 Catalina Avenue, Berkeley, California 94707.

Oregon Shakespearean Festival

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Summer 1978 at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival was the season of the monsoon. Normally, during the occasional rainy evening at the outdoor Elizabethan Stagehouse hardy spectators in foul weather gear huddle together to watch actors in rain capes or street clothes complete the show. Thus, between 1935 and 1977 only eight performances actually were cancelled or stopped owing to rain. But whether because of Margaret's dire curses in *Richard III* or the talk about *Macbeth* forthcoming in 1979 (talk about "that Scottish play" violating a primal theatrical taboo), a dark cloud hovered over Ashland for about a week, often saving its moisture for show time. The pelting of the pitiless storm stopped performances on two consecutive nights, curtailed several other shows, and left actors and audiences soggy and frustrated. To be sure, occasional benefits did accrue (spectacular curses by Margaret and Lady Anne that seemed to have heavenly sanction, an opening storm scene in *The Tempest* accompanied by real lightning and a driving rain), but equally common was the sight of Richard III looking up into the rain and saying "shine out, fair sun" or Clarence trying to deliver "what pain it was to drown! / What dreadful noise of waters in my ears!" in such a downpour that spectators two rows away could not hear or even see him.

Indoors at the Bowmer Theatre, Jerry Turner's controversial production of *Timon of Athens* provoked storms of a different sort. Treating Shakespeare's script as a "work in progress" or "a dramatic incompleted fable," Turner in his program note asked his audience "to view the author's work, not as something perfect, but as

something flawed, experimental, and in process.” Since many scholars argue that *Timon* is an unfinished play, Turner’s decision to make adjustments

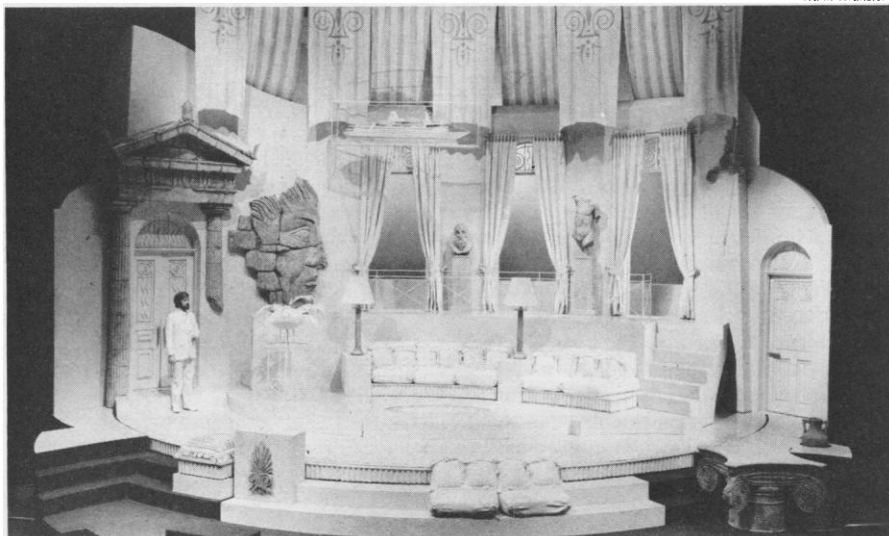
TIMON OF ATHENS. Presented at the Angus Bowmer Theatre by the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in repertory 17 June–23 September. Director, Jerry Turner; Scene Design, Richard L. Hay; Lighting, Dirk Epperson; Costumes, Jeannie Davidson; Composer, Robert MacDougall; Choreographer, Thomas A. Scales.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Alcibiades*, William Ferriter; *Apemantus*, Danny Frishman; *Flaminius*, Rex E. Allen; *Flavius*, Bo Smith; *Lucius*, Bruce T. Gooch; *Lucullus*, Lachlan Wilkerson; *The Painter*, Malcolm Hillgartner; *Phrynia*, Jahnna Beecham; *The Poet*, Bruce Paul Abbott; *Sempronius*, Randy Schaub; *Timon of Athens*, Michael Kevin; *Timandra*, Francine L. Borovkoff.

in the Folio script was hardly surprising, and many of his changes and omissions made sound

three acts. Thus, at the outset (to the strains of “Harlem Nocturne”) the spectator was confronted with an opulent “modern” living room of couches and pillows, beiges and whites, classical statuary and columns, banners, an enormous stone head, and, suspended from the ceiling, a seven-foot ocean liner in an eight-foot case. Starting with the Poet and Painter, the figures who entered were dressed in white—in business suits, leisure outfits, Arab dress. There was even one figure (who turned out to be Lucullus, the first denier of III. i) in ten-gallon hat and boots. The figures jostling to partake of Timon’s bounty were thereby associated with oil and shipping, with Timon’s “room” reeking of money, power, and superficiality. The one jarring note was Apemantus, a tiny, abrasive figure in simple black played by midget Danny Frishman, who delivered most of his lines from a little platform downstage

Hank Kranzler



Set for *Timon of Athens*

theatrical and critical sense. Thus, he inserted II. i and II. ii (where the Senator decides to dun Timon) before the first banquet (I. ii), cut the Fool’s appearance in II. ii, gave the lines of the strangers of III. ii to the Poet, transposed IV. i and IV. ii, ran together the two Flavius scenes in IV. iii and V. i, and cut the soldier looking for Timon (V. iii). Such changes did not necessarily finish what Shakespeare had left in process, but they did economize on characters and add to the narrative flow.

Turner’s most striking (and most controversial) choice, however, was seen in the design of this production—in particular, Richard Hay’s elaborate, visually exciting set for Shakespeare’s first

left on the fringes of the room. The first banquet was a sumptuous affair, with Timon and his guests dressed in colorful gowns and turbans and seated on Persian rugs; the banquet, topped by a flowing fountain, rose from below. With great theatrical force, Timon’s wealth and magnificence were given a local habitation and a name in terms immediately recognizable to an audience conditioned by glossy magazines and jet-set imagery.

The high point of the production came near the end of Shakespeare’s III. vi (Turner cut the re-entry of the flatterers looking for their gowns and jewels). After pelting his false friends with warm water (this time served in black bowls rather than the golden containers of the first banquet), Timon

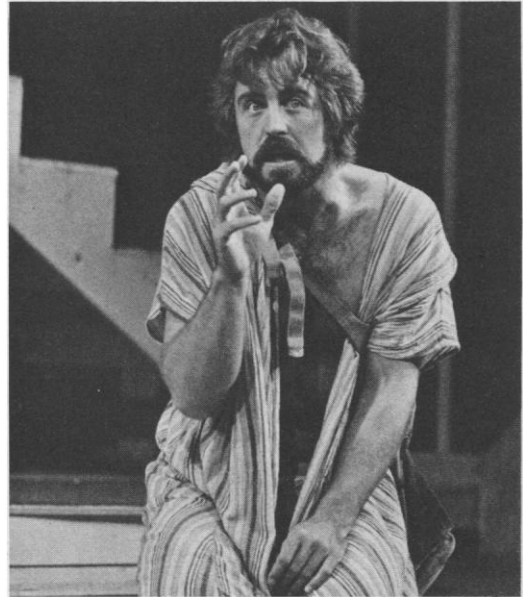
pursued the three figures around the stage, ripped off their gowns, pulled down banners, smashed a vase, and vented his rage by desecrating the room that symbolized his past existence. At this moment, with the flatterers leaping for the exits and with strange sounds and music in the background, the entire stage turned, revealing to the audience a stark, unprepossessing, wooden configuration—in essence, the backside of the set, the unadorned underpinnings of that world we had been viewing for over an hour. Flavius and his fellows then parted at the foot of this new “set” (IV. ii), and Turner’s first act ended with Timon rising out of the darkness above (still in his white suit) to deliver over the heads of the audience his tirade against Athens (IV. i) while stripping off most of his clothes. At the intermission, the viewer was left with one world shattered and lost and a new, unknown arena yet to come.

The second part of the production took place in a modified version of this “other side”: a main stage with a runway (used extensively in the verbal pyrotechnics between Timon and Apemantus), a large area below for Timon’s cave, and a limited above. In contrast to the opulent detail of part one, the various figures were now clothed simply, at times in “rehearsal dress,” with Alcibiades and the two whores in olive drab fatigue uniforms, the thieves in makeshift array, the Senators in dark business suits, Timon in loin cloth and striped gown (a Moses in the wilderness), Apemantus in white, Flavius in blue. The elaborate properties used earlier now gave way to wooden rifles and obviously ersatz gold pieces, self-admitted theatrical tools rather than the spurious, now discredited “realism” of Timon’s villa. The contrast with part one was striking and effective.

Within the framework established by Turner’s concept and Hay’s design, the acting was solid, often exciting. As Timon, Michael Kevin found nuances and variations in what to me had always seemed a monochromatic part, playing trusting generosity followed by disbelief, fury, savage misanthropy, and finally a touching recognition of love and devotion in his steward. For me the scenes with Bo Smith’s Flavius were particularly compelling, for the loyalty of the “one honest man” forced Timon to reconsider his position and led to highly theatrical revelations. Using his diminutive stature skillfully, Danny Frishman punched out Apemantus’ lines, with particular success in I. ii where his barbs and distinctive voice countered the opulence of the banquet. Elsewhere, director and actors endeavored to individualize Shakespeare’s many lords, senators, and false friends. Thus, in III. i the first request from Timon for money from Lucullus (Lachlan Wilkerson) interrupted a post-swim affair with Phrynia

(Jahnna Beecham), who replaced Shakespeare’s innocuous servant; Lucius (Bruce Gooch) was then accosted upon his return from tennis (all in the same “room”); and Sempronius (Randy Schaub) was an Arab merchant in white with worry beads and a drawn out “mmm . . .”

Hank Kranzler



Michael Kevin (Timon)

Two of Kevin’s choices in his final scene struck me as especially interesting. When the two Senators arrived to make their plea, Timon was below, out of sight; but hearing their public apologies and their offer of love and wealth, he rose to their level and was moved to tears by this vindication that momentarily drew him back into the human community. When he then discovered the ulterior motive behind the Senators’ appearance (that Timon’s presence was needed to save Athens from Alcibiades), the anger and misanthropy of his final speeches became even more powerful. In his final lines, Kevin then gave specific force to “Lips, let four words go by and language end!” by biting out his tongue (echoing the famous moment in *The Spanish Tragedy*), a powerful and stunning climax to the vituperation and verbal anguish that dominated the second half of this production. When in the closing moments Flavius unveiled an inscription spelling out “Timon of Athens,” the memory of both Timon’s words and his final silence was effectively carried forward, even though Timon had no death scene and the emphasis at the end was upon Alcibiades and the Senators.

Other bits of added business, however, struck

me as strained, even self-defeating. Timon's encounter with the three bandits (IV. iii) degenerated into a rather pointless comic turn, with the thieves first leaving the gold behind, then scrambling back to pick it up. Shakespeare's Amazons, who provide a masque at the first banquet, were transformed into five Las Vegas showgirls who, after individual bumps and grinds, "mingled" with the guests, offered room keys, and thereby overshadowed an important speech by Apemantus. For me, the "anything for gold" antics of Phrynia and Timandra (Francine Borovkoff) in IV. iii were overdone, as was the comic business with a rope involving the Poet and Painter before they found Timon. The play's final confrontation was undermined when the "army" with which Alcibiades threatened Athens consisted of the two whores and the three thieves, all with rehearsal prop weapons.

The major problem with this production, however, was linked to its major asset. For the impressive set and design had its price—the almost total undoing of the Alcibiades plot and the loss of any sense of Senate or Senators or even Athens. Given an elaborate living room as focus, Shakespeare's first Senate scene (III. v), a confrontation between Alcibiades and Senators basic to the sub-plot, was inconvenient, since Timon's room presumably could not double as a Senate chamber. The director therefore redistributed the lines from this scene, turning most of them into dinner conversation during the first banquet where various guests, rather than the Senate, argued with Alcibiades. Later, between Shakespeare's III. iv and III. vi, Alcibiades made a brief appearance alone, reacting to a hand-held paper that called for his banishment. Members of the audience unfamiliar with the script were unable to follow the reasons for this banishment (since this production displayed no affront to Senate or Senators). Similarly, no entity equivalent to "the Senate" was established in III. v to prepare for the second, parallel confrontation between Alcibiades and Athens in the final scene. With "the Senate" thus eclipsed in favor of the director's "room," I came away with a cluster of striking images but no sense of an Athens that drove out both Timon and Alcibiades. Nor did Turner's ending make clear to me whether the Senators' capitulation and Alcibiades' consent was desirable or empty. Overall, the gains from the modern villa setting and the visible breaking down of Timon's world certainly outweighed any losses. But I nevertheless felt a bit cheated when the excitement of Kevin's Timon gave way at the end to an undeveloped Alcibiades and some ill-defined Senators, a confrontation that had little relevance to earlier scenes and to the situation in Athens that had caused so much

suffering. At least one dimension of this puzzling script thereby remained unexplored or (in Turner's sense) unfinished.

Outdoors at the Elizabethan Stagehouse, Judd Parkin's production of *The Taming of the Shrew* was the obvious crowd-pleaser of the 1978 season—athletic, inventive, visually exciting (with striking red costumes), and very funny. Parkin

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW. Presented at the outdoor Elizabethan Stagehouse by the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in repertory 10 June–23 September. Director, Judd Parkin; Setting and Properties Designer, William Bloodgood; Lighting, Dirk Epperson; Costumes, Robert Blackman; Music Director, Mark Wardenburg; Fight Director, David L. Boushey.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Baptista Minola*, Dan Kremer; *Bianca*, Kenned MacIver; *Biondello*, Ron Woods; *Gremio*, Pat Patton; *Grumio*, Richard Rossi; *Hortensio*, Larry Ballard; *Katherine*, Fredi Olster; *Lucentio*, Richard Denison; *Pedant*, Jack Wellington Cantwell; *Petruchio*, Rick Hamilton; *Tranio*, John Shepard; *Vincenzio*, Richard Farrell.

dispensed with Christopher Sly and the Induction, starting instead with a Punch and Judy show (with much pounding and whacking), an accompanying song about a husband and his shrewish wife, and a meeting between Kate and Petruchio punctuated by a blow. From the opening street scene to the closing banquet, no holds were barred.

Fredi Olster's Kate was strident and combative; Rick Hamilton's Petruchio was aggressive, even at times manic. Their wooing scene (II. i) was lively and very physical, with inventive comic business on almost every line (including what seemed to me an illogical near exit by Petruchio). In III. ii Petruchio arrived for his marriage via a rope from far above, just after Grumio (Richard Rossi) had shot off a musket. Olster's Kate gave no knowing winks to the audience in the final scene, but the director still softened the ending by having Petruchio give back her cap, prevent her from kneeling to place her hand beneath his foot, and then exit in triumph with her so that this pair was clearly distinguished from everyone else on stage.

In this production, *everything* had to be funny (no "serious relief" permitted). Thus, from the outset Richard Denison's naive, mooning Lucentio was undercut and rendered laughable (especially in his jostling and struggling with Hortensio) while being upstaged and anticipated by an excellent Tranio (John Shepard). Kenned MacIver's Bianca was a goody-goody daughter, constantly posing for her father or her suitors, even faking a blow from Kate in II. i to gain sympathy. To spice up his final scene, the director added a lively comic duel between Kate and the Widow, the latter played with great verve and a marvelous throaty voice by Mimi Carr. As Bap-

tista, Dan Kremer got his share of laughs, whether hurriedly clapping his hands on those of Kate and Petruchio in II. i to conclude the match or letting his jaw drop into a sustained stunned expression during Kate's long speech at the end. Equally broad (and funny) were Jack Cantwell's Pedant and Richard Farrell's Vincentio. I can still see Farrell putting his finger to his lips in IV. v to silence Petruchio's "This is a man . . .," obviously wishing to prolong Kate's attentions and presence. The production included much hitting and bumping, particularly by Pat Patton's Gremio, the wielder of a stout stick. As Biondello, Ron Woods was both musical and acrobatic, at one point shimmying far up one of the stage pillars to avoid Vincentio. Stage business and comic tricks seemed inexhaustible (e.g., the substitution of a skeleton for the meat with Kate's back turned in IV. iii). Perhaps funniest of all was the appearance of Hortensio/Litio in II. i with the lute shattered about his head. With wonderful comic timing and great facial control, Larry Ballard made a show-stopping descent down an outer staircase, night after night eliciting a long series of laughs, including three on one line: "And there I stood—amazed—for a while." I still do not understand why "for a while" got the biggest laugh of the evening, but it did, consistently.

Inevitably, some of the inventiveness in the pursuit of laughs fell flat. Despite a great deal of movement and business, the scenes with Curtis and the servants at Petruchio's house were not very funny, while the attempt to milk laughter out of a stuttering tailor in IV. iii was strained and unnecessary. At times, the director seemed to be playing against the words to gain his effects. Thus, to establish a Bianca in II. i who was wronging Kate rather than the other way around, Parkin not only eliminated the blow called for by the Folio stage direction but also cut the tied hands, thereby canceling the first of several significant "hand" images that span the play. Overall, however, this production was so funny, energetic, and well paced that such changes, omissions, and puzzles swept by unnoticed. For those who prefer *Shrew* as a rollicking farce, Parkin's production was one to admire and enjoy.

Michael Addison's production of *The Tempest* offered the Ashland audience spectacular effects and visual treats—but the price was high. Consider, for example, the opening scene. Above were the Master and one mariner at the wheel; below were the courtiers (in black), the Boatswain, and the remaining mariners. Much noise, movement, clapping of hatches, and playing of wind then conveyed the sense of a storm on shipboard, by no means an easy task on this open stage. But, especially during the second half of the scene, the

storm noise drowned out the dialogue, particularly the important lines of the Boatswain (despite a heroic effort by Bruce Gooch). In setting up his ship, moreover, the director chose to ignore many of Shakespeare's signals. For example, the Master was kept on stage, above, to give directions that

THE TEMPEST. Presented at the outdoor Elizabethan Stage-house by the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in repertory 11 June–24 September. Director, Michael Addison; Setting and Properties Designer, William Bloodgood; Lighting, Dirk Epperson; Costumes, Jeannie Davidson; Composer, Robert MacDougall; Choreographer, Judith Kennedy.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Alonso*, Michael Santo; *Antonio*, Jack Wellington Cantwell; *Ariel*, Keith Grant; *Boatswain*, Bruce Gooch; *Caliban*, Danny Frishman; *Ferdinand*, Malcolm Hillgartner; *Gonzalo*, Anthony Amendola; *Miranda*, Francine L. Borovkoff; *Prospero*, Robert MacDougall; *Sebastian*, Rex E. Allen; *Stephano*, Dan Kremer; *Trinculo*, Ronald Edmundson Woods.

were repeated by the Boatswain. When the courtiers next appeared (dressed in white), the audience was, in effect, hearing them for the first time, thanks to the storm noise of I. i, so that important lines were not available as preparation for this second courtier scene (e.g., "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" or "Use your authority"). For this and other reasons, II. i seemed long, even pointless (even with many of the gibes from Antonio and Sebastian cut). Given the importance for this play of the "three men of sin" and the interplay of ideas here and in III. iii, having the courtiers enter and exit crying "Ferdinand!" struck me as tasteless and reductive. In this production, I. i became Storm and II. i became Grief, with little or no development of the many other images, ideas, and psychological dimensions in the script.

Addison's taste for spectacle could be confusing. Thus, the program placed "the scene" as "a ship at sea; afterwards an uninhabited island." But the *dramatis personae* in the same program listed twelve actors who played "islanders." These islanders, whether people or spirits (I was never certain but, then, neither were some of the actors I asked), watched silently during many of the scenes, served the banquet in III. iii (wearing elaborate masks reminiscent of Easter Island), and acted as hounds in IV. i. As the final image of the production, the audience saw several of these figures stealing forth as the house lights went down after Prospero's Epilogue, presumably to inherit the island. I was left with no sense of how these ill-defined figures were to co-exist with Caliban (who does have a claim to the island, as stated in I. ii). Meanwhile, at the curtain call I was surprised to observe that the islanders had not picked up Prospero's discarded mantle, which presumably had been the object of their final surge.

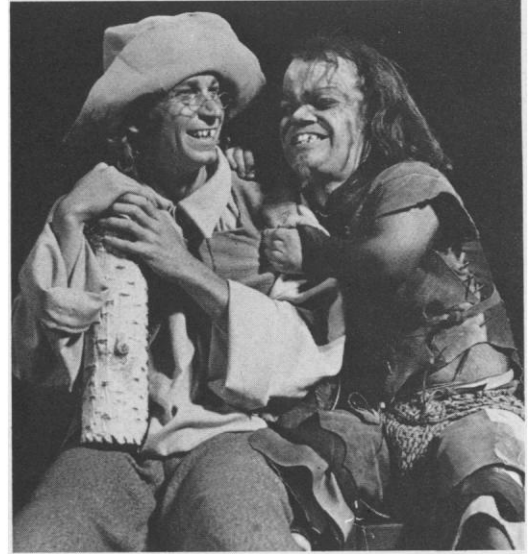
Here and elsewhere, the director's choices created new puzzles and jarred with Shakespeare's words and implied effects. Having the islanders wave their bushes when Sebastian and Antonio threatened violence in II. i verged on the ridiculous. The presence of such figures during Caliban's beautiful speech in III. ii ("the isle is full of noises . . .") trivialized the imagery to the point where one would almost have expected the ersatz gold pieces from *Timon* to fall from above at "the clouds methought would open, and show riches / Ready to drop upon me." The "banquet" called for by Shakespeare in III. iii became merely two bowls of fruit or native produce dwarfed by the giant Easter Island figures. And the disappearance of the banquet "with a quaint device" was here eclipsed by the reappearance of these bizarre islanders who, having stolen in silently, towered over the courtiers. Any sense of the evanescence of an apparently substantial banquet was quite lost, as was the sequence of images that started with Caliban's speech on dream-like reality and led through this moment to Prospero's famous speech on insubstantiality. Consistently, Addison changed or suppressed striking images or moments in the script (e.g., Prospero's charmed circle of V. i) in favor of his own often limited and limiting images (e.g., sounds of surf or wind impinging heavily upon Prospero's Epilogue).

The acting was uneven. As suggested in a program note, Prospero's anger at his brother was a dominant force in this production, so Robert MacDougall played great rage at the end of III. iii and the beginning of V. i. But he had difficulty building to these effects from his speeches in I. ii (which seemed bland to me) and coordinating them with IV. i (which seemed flat). Ariel was played by Keith Grant, a lithe, black actor with feline grace and a fine voice, who provided a highly emotional spirit, whether in his contorted, pained reaction to Prospero's anger in I. ii or in his anguished account of Gonzalo's sorrow in V. i (which almost led to a blow from Prospero). One of the few moments in this production that caught for me the true magic of the script was Ferdinand's entrance in I. ii. Here Malcolm Hillgartner played bewilderment with dignity, while Grant as Ariel led in Ferdinand, controlling every movement, almost touching him, yet clearly invisible (and we knew he was invisible because he was so close to Ferdinand, who showed no signs of seeing him). This graceful coordination of two figures, with physical proximity yet great "distance," conveyed more to me about the island than all the stagy effects elsewhere.

Caliban, as played by midget Danny Frishman, was gruff and primitive, gaining strong effects with the curses and epithets of I. ii and with the

comedy scenes, but losing something in the dream speech of III. ii and other "poetic" moments. For most spectators, Trinculo and Stephano as played by Ron Woods and Dan Kremer were the high points of this production. Woods's stiff-jointed, marionette-like entrance as Trinculo in II. ii usually brought down the house, while Kremer's drunken routines were ingenious and successful.

Hank Krantzler



Dan Kremer (Stephano)
Danny Frishman (Caliban)

At times, especially in the highly drunken III. ii, the clowns and Caliban may have been straining too hard for their laughs, but even when Stephano drew out the laughter as Caliban kissed (and tickled) his feet, no one wanted these funny scenes to stop so that we could return to the courtiers and the spectacle. The comic scenes overbalanced the rest of the production. But who would complain? To quote Prospero in I. ii: "It works."

Given the director's emphasis upon spectacle, I was surprised that in IV. i the masque was so static (three masked goddesses standing in various positions above) and the dance so meager (six dancers in a very limited space), even though great importance was attached to the breaking of the masque and to Prospero's reaction. In a variety of ways, "spectacle" in its many senses was not integrated successfully with the script; various scenes and figures that should have been integrated remained discrete. Little trust, it seemed to me, had been placed in the actors or in the audience. Rather, the director seemed to be allying himself with the Prospero of Act V: "this rough magic / I here abjure."

Pat Patton's *Richard III*, like his *3 Henry VI* of

1977, was an exciting, well-paced production that used the outdoor Elizabethan Stagehouse to full advantage. To keep his running time (without

RICHARD III. Presented at the outdoor Elizabethan Stagehouse by the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in repertory 12 June–22 September. Director, Pat Patton; Setting and Properties Designer, William Bloodgood; Lighting, Dirk Epperson; Costumes, Jeannie Davidson; Fight Director, David L. Boushey; Music Director, Mark Wardenburg.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Lady Anne*, Kenned MacIver; *Duke of Buckingham*, Larry R. Ballard; *Catesby*, Lachlan Wilkerson; *George, Duke of Clarence*, Rex Rabold; *Earl of Derby*, Thomas S. Oleniacz; *Edward, Prince of Wales*, Robert E. Baird; *King Edward IV*, Michael Kevin; *Queen Elizabeth*, JoAnn Johnson Patton; *Lord Grey*, Bo Smith; *Lord Hastings*, Anthony Amendola; *Henry, Earl of Richmond*, Gary Sloan; *Queen Margaret*, Mimi Carr; *Duke of Norfolk*, Bruce T. Gooch; *Sir Richard Ratcliffe*, Patrick DeSantis; *Richard, Duke of Gloucester*, Michael Santo; *Earl Rivers*, Rick Hamilton; *Thomas Rotherham*, William Ferriter; *Tyrrel*, Malcolm Hillgartner; *Duchess of York*, Shirley Patton; *Richard, Duke of York*, Cooper A. Lewis.

intermission) just under three hours, Patton cut II. iii (the choric three citizens commenting upon England's uncertain future) and pared down other scenes and speeches, especially the long and highly rhetorical IV. iv. Given the length of the script (second in the canon only to *Hamlet*) and the limited patience of summer festival audiences, I was surprised at how much was *not* deleted. Ashland spectators saw and heard all eleven ghosts, both battle orations, the children of Clarence, the doomed Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan in III. iii, Stanley and Oxford (instead of Urswick) in IV. v, and the Scrivener in III. vi. The director had intended to cut the latter figure but found that his brief speech was necessary to convey elapsed time for the offstage actions between III. v and III. vii—an instructive example of the value of taking seriously Shakespeare's sequence and choices. Gone from this production, however, were the figure of Lovel, the Mayor's appearance in III. i, the pursuivant and priest of III. ii, the rotten armor of III. v, and the chiming clock on the battlefield (V. iii). Meanwhile, this *Richard III* included in IV. iv Colley Cibber's "Off with his head. So much for Buckingham."

Returning from *3 Henry VI*, Michael Santo and Mimi Carr reappeared as Richard and Margaret, with Larry Ballard, the previous season's Henry VI, playing Buckingham (Ballard told me he volunteered to play the corpse of I. ii and the ghost of V. iii). Though appearing in only two scenes, Carr's Margaret cast a shadow over the entire production. In particular, her curses in I. iii, delivered from above to a wide range of figures below, were powerful, electric, even at times overwhelming, not because of any distinctive business

or movement (she was mostly stationary) but owing to the controlled savagery in her voice and posture and the precise enunciation of every syllable. Her words stuck in the memories of characters and spectators for the remainder of the performance. The effect was aptly described by Buckingham: "My hair doth stand an end to hear her curses." Ballard's Buckingham was equally successful: in his playful scenes with Richard where they delight in hoodwinking the Mayor and citizens (III. v, III. vii); his troubled pause in IV. ii when Richard suggests the murder of the two princes; his angry outburst at the end of IV. ii when Richard is not in the giving vein; and finally his dignified acceptance both of his fate and of his responsibility for that fate in V. i where "princely" Buckingham, after his final lines, pulls himself erect, pauses to gain his composure, and then turns to march off to his death. Although inevitably playing in the shadow of Shakespeare's famous villain-hero, this Buckingham had a distinctive personality, energy, and savvy that set him off from everyone else but still left him fatally vulnerable to Richard.

Santo's Richard III was in the grand tradition (albeit with many significant variations), combining wit and sardonic humor with energy, cunning, and audience appeal. Various choices regarding individual passages and stage business could be (and were) questioned by some, but I found the total effect and progression convincing, moving, and meaningful. At the outset Santo backed onto the stage and delivered the famous opening lines to an audience that as yet had not seen his face, directing his (and our) attention to the banner above that displayed the sun of York (a banner replaced in IV. ii with Richard's own boar, and at the end with Richmond's emblem). This choice, like the later decision to play the first "my kingdom for a horse" partially off stage, deliberately undercut a famous passage (thereby troubling some spectators) but at the same time heightened the sun imagery (which climaxes in V. iii, when the sun does not shine upon Richard). For me, Santo's delivery of the big speeches in I. i and I. ii was consistently interesting and revealing. He skillfully varied his tone and rhythms.

The always troublesome wooing of Lady Anne was one of the high points of this production. In the equally successful (but very different) rendition of this moment in the Stratford Festival Canada production of 1977, the focus had been upon Anne's repressed sexuality, realized brilliantly by Martha Henry. Kenned MacIver's Anne was young, beautiful, virginal, and immensely vulnerable, so the focus was thrown back upon Richard (as with his comparable treatment of Clarence, the Greys, Hastings, the Mayor, and Bucking-

ham). The director made adroit use of Anne's attendants and the width of the stage, starting with a tableau of opposition between Richard and



Kenned MacIver (Lady Anne)
Michael Santo (Richard III)

a large group, then building to a more intimate confrontation between two figures—an intense series of interchanges that gave Santo ample opportunity to display his tears, his rhetoric, and his injured tones. The most telling moment came when Richard, kneeling next to Anne downstage center, put his sword in her hand (actually closing her fingers over it), bared his breast, placed the sword point upon his chest, and twice caused her to begin the thrust only to stop her with his twice repeated “But ‘twas . . .” (laying the blame upon her beauty and heavenly face). Since Richard’s wooing was so potent and convincing, his subsequent self-mocking, self-congratulatory speech at Anne’s exit was particularly effective, with the humor engaging but the total effect frightening—a highly theatrical and meaningful combination.

Equally telling was Richard’s parallel wooing of Queen Elizabeth (JoAnn Patton) in IV. iv, this time for the hand of her daughter. One by one the arguments that had succeeded with Anne failed Richard here, so in his growing frustration Santo was forced to promise more than he had intended, ultimately building to the “Myself myself confound!” speech, the clear turning point in this production. Although Richard quickly dismissed Elizabeth after her exit (“Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!”), his control and support

started to slip away after his final pledge, as revealed in the remainder of this scene and in Stanley’s revelations of IV. v. The director found ways to heighten this progression (e.g., by having only one figure wake up Richard in V. iii, in contrast to the eight who greet Richmond), but Santo himself, starting as early as IV. ii, conveyed forcefully the Macbeth-like inability to be satisfied and then the growing deterioration and loss of control late in IV. iv and in V. iii. After the visitation from the ghosts, Santo played the “coward conscience” speech with a combination of shock and bizarre self-mockery and then assumed a false bravado, especially in his oration, that could not conceal an inner emptiness. The final fight sequence pitted him against a series of opponents, wearing him down and leaving him not quite prepared for a fresh and able Richmond. After a cunning, unchivalric trick failed to work, Richard was mortally wounded and, seeing all was hopeless, opened himself to his opponent’s sword, literally (as with Anne in I. ii) setting it in place (although this time the opportunity was taken, not rejected). In these final moments the full meaning of “Myself myself confound” was realized.

Overall, the ensemble acting was solid and energetic. Michael Kevin brought a fine presence and force to his one scene as Edward IV. Anthony Amendola’s Hastings was impassioned and vulnerable (with his part suffering more than any other from directorial cuts). Many small bits stuck in my mind: Malcolm Hillgartner as an insidious Tyrrel with a twisted smile; Patrick DeSantis (like Rod Beattie in Ontario) as a diabolic Ratcliff reminiscent of Macbeth’s Seyton who silently displayed the head of Hastings in III. v, dropping it to the floor with a sickening plop, and looked back at his exit in IV. ii at the disgraced Buckingham as if to write him off.

Several facets of this production failed to work for me. Thus, I saw no logic or progression in Stanley’s speeches and appearances between IV. i and V. iii. More significant, the heavy demands of this script necessitate considerable doubling (unless the company is as large as that in Ontario), which in turn can cause problems. Patton opted for an elaborate coronation scene (IV. ii), thereby (given the time needed for costume changes) leaving himself with only a limited number of available actors to play the citizens of III. vii. Those actors had recently been seen as Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan or, earlier, as Clarence, so the director chose to keep the four figures muffled and stationary (presumably, to avoid creating any complications for the audience) while Richard performed above with his two priests and Buckingham cavorted below, at one point barely able to contain his laughter. The static presentation of

the citizens here left undeveloped Shakespeare's presentation of "England" and "the people" and, along with the omission of the citizens of II. iii and the downplaying of the Mayor, meant that one dimension of the script remained unexplored.

Several of Patton's touches merit further comment. For example, he cut six lines from II. i (starting with Edward's "A pleasing cordial . . .") so that Buckingham's oath, in which he asks God to punish him "With hate in those where I expect most love!" was juxtaposed neatly with the entrance of Richard and Ratcliff. In IV. iii, Richard gave Tyrrel a rosary (which spectators from 1977 may remember as having been appropriated from the corpse of Henry VI) as a token to gain access to the two princes in the Tower. Two scenes later Richard offered this same token to the mother of those princes as an expression of his love for their sister, again underscoring his frightening callousness.

I found the ghost scenes especially effective. Patton dispensed with the tents, instead having the soldiers plant their banners at the two sides of the wide stage to suggest two enclosures. With both Richard and Richmond kneeling, asleep, at the base of the two stage pillars, the sequence of ghosts appeared in smoke and darkness (except for the spotlights upon the two men), providing a chorically whispered "Despair!" to punctuate each statement to Richard. The effect was stylized, eerie, and just right for this stage and this point of the play. The quite different reactions of the two sleepers then made excellent sense and followed from the emphasis upon sleep, dreams, conscience, and torment going back to Clarence in I. iv. For me, the ghosts added an important dimension to Richard's final minutes on stage—giving new meaning to his comments on "A thing devised by the enemy" and to his dismissal of conscience as "Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe." By playing Shakespeare's Act V virtually intact (as opposed to Robin Phillips at Ontario, who cut little from the first four acts but cut heavily in Act V and omitted IV. v), Patton developed and explored the final movement of this long play in many interesting ways, giving us not only Richard's famous successes in the first three acts but also a full look at his limitations, failures, and deterioration in the final third, a climactic fall linked both to an inner crumbling and a confrontation with a higher power that cannot be hoodwinked or mocked out of existence. A long-time skeptic about this play, I felt here for the first time the full force of Shakespeare's conception and total sequence, especially the continuing role of "conscience" in a variety of contexts that became progressively more meaningful. In 1977, Patton convinced me that *3 Henry VI* had its own

distinctive power and coherence. Here in 1978 he and Michael Santo proved that *Richard III* is a unit, a total experience, a whole that is far more than merely the sum of some famous parts.

With the 1978 production of *Timon of Athens*, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival has completed its second full cycle of Shakespeare's 37 plays, an accomplishment that can be measured against Stratford Festival Canada, which completed its first such cycle in 1978 with a production of *Titus Andronicus*. Since 1970, moreover, one Shakespearean production per season has been presented indoors in the "modern" Bowmer Theatre, with three productions outdoors on the "Elizabethan" stage. The different options available on the two stages are revealing. Since by unwritten law the outdoor productions entail "Renaissance" costumes and limited if any additions to the basic stage, the yearly Bowmer production has provided the opportunity for those experiments with design, special effects, and transplantation characteristic of many contemporary renditions of Shakespeare. Since 1974 I have seen at the Bowmer a rococo, fairy-tale *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, an extraordinary, timeless *Winter's Tale*, a *Comedy of Errors* set in a carnival midway, a *Measure for Measure* set in Freud's Vienna, and this season's spectacular, timely *Timon of Athens*. Given the flexibility of the Bowmer and the rich potential for revealing trade-offs, such experiments can convey great excitement and realize new meanings (or, when less successful, can blur the force and integrity of the original scripts).

The assets of the outdoor Elizabethan Stagehouse are less obvious (setting aside for the moment the stunning natural surroundings of mountains, park, and sky). Granted, both scholars and theatrical professionals extol the virtues of the "open stage," but few have really thought through the advantages of an Elizabethan or neo-Elizabethan stage for realizing the potential of scripts originally written with such an arena in mind. With the exception of Pat Patton (who will not be directing an outdoor show in 1979), Ashland in recent years has not developed a core of directors in tune with this Elizabethan stage. At times productions seem to be working against the stage rather than with it, with directors cutting the script, adding special effects, and, most important, introducing a logic perhaps appropriate to the Bowmer but not necessarily to the Elizabethan Stagehouse. But whether for scholar, critic, actor, director, or general theatregoer, Ashland's outdoor stage should be its greatest asset, a distinctive "space" in which to explore and develop the rich possibilities inherent in Shakespearean (and other Elizabethan) scripts in the same spirit that called forth two complete renditions of the

canon. If *Timon of Athens*, *Titus Andronicus*, and all three parts of *Henry VI* are worth doing today (as I assume they are), they are worth doing well and sympathetically in an arena where their imagery, characters, and overall logic may best be appreciated and displayed. As demonstrated by the Royal Shakespeare Company at The Other Place and The Warehouse, and by The Young Vic, "good theatre" can come in many sizes and packages. The Ashland Elizabethan Stagehouse (despite the vagaries of weather, personnel, and taste) should be and often is one of the most exciting and important "spaces" in the world for the presentation of Shakespeare's plays.

PLANS FOR 1979. Producing Director Jerry Turner has announced the following program for the expanded season: *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*. ADDRESS: Oregon Shakespearean Festival Association, Ashland, Oregon 97520.

Shakespeare in Seattle

CHARLES FREY
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"Where God is ubiquitous, there are no accidents." In notes to his production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, director Duncan Ross explained how it happened

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. Presented at the Seattle Repertory Theatre March–April. Director, Duncan Ross; Scene Design, Pete Davis; Costumes, Lewis D. Rampino; Lighting, Richard Devin; Technical Director, Robert Scales; Stage Manager, Jay Moran; Music Consultant, Ken Benshoff; Choreographer, Harry Groener.

PRINCIPAL CAST: Antonio, Nelson Welch; Beatrice, Megan Cole; Benedick, Harry Groener; Borachio, Michael McKee; Claudio, Peter Webster; Conrade, Loren Foss; Dogberry, Richard Dix; Don John, John Abajian; Don Pedro, Jon Peter Benson; Hero, Gun-Marie Nilsson; Leonato, Andy Backer; Margaret, Lori Larsen; Ursula, Mary Benson; Verges, David O. Petersen.

that Dogberry's Watch "comprehended two aspidious persons" (III. v) seemingly by accident. "The ultimate scenes," continued Ross, "show the true lover accepting his true love veiled, an unknown mystery, on faith alone—a stage image of the human journey with and into the unknown, trusting in God's grace of which we were given a sign in the Resurrection—which is also symbolized in the restoration of Hero." But, though the otherworldly set—dominated by metal lattice panels, filmy batik drapes, and glass tubing—and

the abstract costumes—Don Pedro ("God's anointed deputy," according to Ross) and Hero in white, Don John and cohorts in black—contributed to Ross's allegorical design, God's presence was, I think happily, far from ubiquitous onstage. The action abounded with actors' delights in earthy, irreducible accidents.

Most delighted was Benedick, played by Harry Groener as something of a flusterer from the start. From his initial entrance he was mugging at the more restrained Beatrice of Megan Cole—who insisted with worried seriousness, "I know you of old"—and he was unable to find his way offstage toward the end of the first scene. In the process of "overhearing" Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio (III. ii), he bounced about the stage from one impossible hiding place to another, and, once having confessed to himself his love for Beatrice, he slipped into the mannerisms of a foolish lout, constantly tripping, grinning, and buffooning. These moments of overbroad acting were more than compensated for as Groener, time after time, caught happy notes of infectious, insinuating good humor and amiability in Benedick's speech and behavior. When delivering his sententiae, for example, he would often pause, tilt his head, and slow his words as if to tell his listeners: "Receive now another witty pronouncement." Near the play's end, when he told Beatrice "I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will," he accompanied the slight with an ingratiating smile. He handled difficult points in Benedick's part with ingenuity and grace: his rudeness to Claudio immediately after the masked ball (II. i) was plainly motivated by genuine annoyance, if not anger, at Beatrice's dancing barbs. When Claudio accuses Hero (IV. i), Benedick is made to comment: "This looks not like a nuptial." Groener wisely chose to let the humor remain muted and delivered the line straight. He received Beatrice's infamous line, "Kill Claudio," with bowed head, then slowly backed away as he answered with soft intensity: "Ha, not for the wide world." Yet his subsequent submission to Beatrice's will was fully believable as he honored her appeal: "O that I were a man!"

The Beatrice of Megan Cole appeared intermittently in tune with director Ross's conception of the lovers' place in a cosmic, providential order. Her crimson dress supported the verve and gaiety with which she sometimes animated the stage, but she took Benedick and herself more seriously than he did. She let the mirth of the moment melt completely away, for example, when she answered Don Pedro's suggestion that she was "born in a merry hour." She delivered her reply with a dying fall: "No, sure, my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a star danc'd, and under that I was born. Cousins, God give you joy!" At